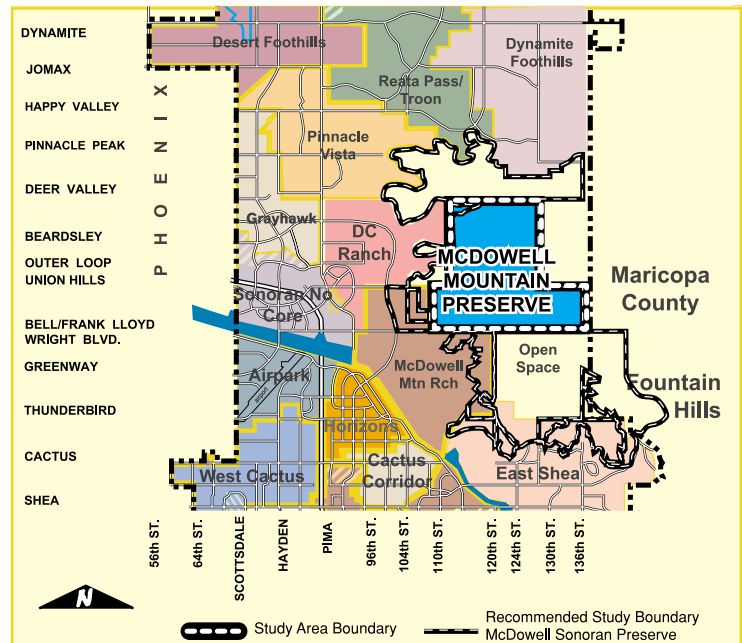


McDOWELL MOUNTAIN PRESERVE CHARACTER AREA

General Description of the Area:

The area includes the McDowell Mountains, major canyons leading out from the mountains and related alluvial areas. The outer reaches of the area extend from Happy Valley Road on the north to Shea Boulevard on the south and from 100th Street on the west to 146th Street on the east.



Overview of the Area:

Most of the area is natural, without man-made intrusions. A few scattered mine shafts, only one of which was productive and most of which occur toward the north end, dot the area. The high peaks in the area give refuge to a cluster of radio antennae, and ranching activity remnants such as trails, windmills, water troughs, and fencing still remain. A small number of prehistoric sites can also be found in this area.



Character Features and Elements:

The area is dominated by steep, rocky peaks forming a spine that runs from north by northwest to south by southeast, and is interspersed with lateral ridges and deep canyons. The base of the mountain range is highest at the north end and drops approximately 500 feet in elevation at the south end. There is quite a variety of plant species at these elevations as well as a multitude of different slope faces and geologic materials. The three highest peaks (Thompson Peak, McDowell, and East End) all have elevation near the 4000 foot mark above sea level.



How This Area Fits into Community:

The McDowell Mountains are the most visible and dominant feature in the city. They serve as a backdrop to the bulk of the city and provide a dominant separation from the Verde Valley and large mountains to the east. The mountain provide habitat and migration routes for a variety of wildlife, act as a natural break from developed areas and serve as a connection to many different neighborhoods. The mountains also provide an important recreational amenities and are a source of community identity and pride.